

## **UTILITY MITTEN**

The present invention relates to a cover for use with a bristled brush to soften the adverse consequences of the bristles and, more particularly, to a cover which encases the bristles while allowing the free flow of washing materials such as soap and water.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

### ***Field of the Invention***

The focus of the utility mitten of the present invention is in the area of the cleaning of items having a relatively delicate, scratchable surface, which could be adversely effected by the bristles of a brush, the use of which is essential to adequate cleaning.

A specific area of concern arises when one attempts to clean one's vehicle, either at home or at one of those spray booths that permeate the landscape. Particularly with newer vehicles, where the paint includes a clear coat, the use of a brush of some sort is perceived as a necessary evil in order to get rid of road film, bugs and oil soaked dirt. The use of a brush,

even a brush with the softest of bristles, is a matter of considerable concern to the enthusiast and even to the more casual and less protective vehicle owner.

Brush marks are not only unsightly, they are, in fact, macroscopic grooves in the paint and, as such, tend to trap and retain particulate matter in the paint which, if not carefully and completely removed, can easily become permanently embedded. Such a result is not only unsightly, but detrimental to the structure of the finish which has been applied to protect the vehicle.

In commercial automated car washes, it has become chic to advertise "brushless" systems. Such systems typically use large strips of relatively soft material which are soaked with suds and oscillated over the surface of the vehicle to be washed, essentially slapping at the finish in hopes of dislodging dirt without damaging the paint. Such systems do not provide a consistent cleaning, and they often leave a mess which is unsatisfactory, at best.

Such "brushless" systems are usually not available to the do-it-yourselfers, who drive their vehicles into a bay and put their money in a timing meter of some sort. Once activated, a high pressure nozzle and a relatively soft brush are at the disposal of the user with mixed results, and the potential damage to the vehicle finish is proportionate to the force applied to the finish. It is the focus of the present invention to provide the vehicle owner with a simple way of avoiding even the potential for damage to his or her vehicle finish.

### ***Overview of the Prior Art***

As previously pointed out, there appears to be no device available in the market place that a consumer can purchase that will permit a vehicle owner to wash that vehicle without fear or concern for the finish.

The general idea of placing a cover over a brush is not a revolutionary concept, although it has no precedent in the present environment. Spanel et. al, for example, in 1944, issued patent number 2,353,517 for an elastic sleeve over a tooth brush as a protective cover.

Perhaps more to the point, Wirth applied for, and received, patent number 5,177,831 for a cloth covered sponge mop, which he perceived as being useful for washing and waxing cars. While the thought was in the right vein, the availability of a sponge mop, other than in the kitchen, is ever in doubt, and, indeed, the effectiveness of a soft sponge relative to the venerable bristled brush for cleaning is not subject to serious challenge. Moreover, the smooth inner surface of the cover would not permit effective application of cleaning materials such as soaps, except perhaps by capillary action, and such would be counterproductive in the environment of the present invention.

### **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a device for minimizing, if not totally eliminating, damage to a vehicle finish as a result of attempting to clean that finish.

It is, therefore, a principal objective of the present invention to provide the vehicle owner with an accessory which can be readily stored and

transported and which fits over a bristled brush to permit deep cleaning of a vehicle finish without scratching or marring the finish.

It is another objective of the present invention to provide an accessory which encases a bristled brush, while permitting the brush so encased to become engorged with suds for use in cleaning the finish of a vehicle. It is a further objective of the invention to provide an accessory, as described, which permits the uniform dispersal of sudsy water through the mitten for application to the vehicle surface without marring or scratching that surface.

Yet another objective of the present invention is to provide a soft cover of absorbent material which is sufficiently firm on its internal surface as to resist penetration by the bristles of the brush it encases, while presenting a soft, non abrasive surface to the finish of the vehicle to be cleaned, thereby to protect the finish while cleaning the same with the same efficiency as though the brush bristles were exposed to the finish.

The foregoing, as well as other objects and advantages of the present invention, will become apparent to one skilled in the art from a

reading of the following Detailed Description of a Preferred Embodiment,  
taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheet of drawings, wherein

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION THE FIGURES OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIG. 1 is a pictorial representation of an accessory, in the form of  
5 a mitten, shown in perspective, in order to give the viewer an overall  
impression of the device;

FIG. 2 is a pictorial representation of the mitten of FIG. 1 as it is  
applied to a typical bristled brush;

FIG. 3 is a view, similar to that of FIG. 2, with the mitt in its fully  
10 operative position about the brush;

FIG. 4 is a side elevation of the mitt of FIG. 1, partially sectioned  
along lines 4-4 of FIG. 3, in order to show the environment in which the mitt  
has particular utility; and,

FIG. 5, is a sectional view of a cross section of the mitten, taken  
15 along lines 5-5 of FIG. 4, and illustrating, in some detail, the layers of  
material which interact to provide the advantages attributable to the mitt.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the drawings, and initially to FIG. 1, an accessory, in the form of a mitten, constructed in accordance with the present invention is shown at 10.

5           The mitt 10 is generally tubular in configuration and, as illustrated, has a closed end 12 and an opening 14 opposite the closed end 12. The mitt 10 is constructed of one of a number of well known soft, pliable materials, including, but not limited to wool, cotton, microfiber materials and any combination or blends of any of them. In order to permit encasing of  
10       the brush within the mitt, a centrally disposed, longitudinally extending opening is provided along the seam 16.

          It is an objective of the mitt, or mitten, 10 of the present invention to encase a bristled brush used for cleaning the finish of an automobile, or the like, so as to protect that finish from the harshness of the  
15       brush bristles. To this end, and with reference to FIGS. 2 and 3, a typical brush 21, having bristles 23 is illustrated.

It will be understood that the brush 21 is intended as illustrative of a brush that may be used in a home environment, as well as in the commercial car wash booths which permeate the landscape. The brush 21 has a tubular handle 25 through which water, including sudsy water, i.e., water with soap or other cleaning compounds added, in some instances, is fed to the brush where it then flows over the bristles as the brush is moved along the vehicles surface.

Again, as seen in FIGS. 2 and 3, the mitt 10 is slipped over the brush 21 where it is secured about the handle in any one of several well known means such as, i.e., by a hook and loop closure device, e.g., Velcro®, strap 27. It will be appreciated that other devices such as hook and eye, zippers and buckles are within the contemplation of the invention.

The mitt 10 is formed, in accordance with the present invention, by at least two layers of relatively soft material, as seen in FIG. 5. There is an outer layer 30, which presents a soft, relatively smooth surface, in the immediate proximity of the bristles of the brush, preventing the bristles from inadvertent contact with the finish of the vehicle to be cleaned.



An inner layer 32, in facial contact with said outer layer, is provided and is of a somewhat harder finish in order that the bristles of the brush will not inadvertently scratch the vehicle being cleaned.

While the materials used to form the inner and outer layers of material 30 and 32 are at least semi porous, it is a further feature of the invention that the sudsy water engorged in the mitt 10 about the brush 21 be readily disbursed over the vehicle surface to be cleaned, and, to this end, small openings 34 are formed, or otherwise provided in that portion 36 of material which directly interfaces with the bristles of brush. Sudsy water in the mitt 10 about the bristles 23 will, thus, freely flow to the vehicle's finish without any abrasive contact therewith.

It will now be appreciated that in use, one need only to remove the mitt from its storage place and slip it over a brush. If the brush is in a commercial car wash bay, one need only deposit the requisite sum to start the flow of sudsy water, and use the covered brush as it would be used without the cover and without the potential for damage to the finish of the vehicle. If at home, the same process attends with the same result, and,

moreover, the mitt may be made so economically that it can be disposed of when worn, or for no reason at all.

It is yet another feature of the mitt 10 that, by virtue of the softness of the material, it is readily foldable, or even just wadded up and tossed in the trunk or other storage area of a vehicle when not in use, and is, thus, readily and conveniently transportable from home to any commercial washing site. And, as previously alluded to, the mitt can be so economically produced that it can be thrown away after use should the user elect to do so.

Having thus described a preferred embodiment of the present invention, some variation in the structure and/or materials described will become evident to those skilled in the art from a reading of this specification, and such variations will be understood as contemplated by the invention as hereinafter claimed .